New York
Theatre Critics' Reviews
1944

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1944 PRODUCTIONS

Premieres in Other Years

Original Reviews Appeared in These Volumes

1943 Vol.

STAGE PLAY	PAGES
Another Love Story	260, 261, 262
*Carmen Jones	207, 208, 209
Connecticut Yankee (A)	219, 220, 221, 222
Doctors Disagree	186, 187, 188
Early to Bed	314, 315, 316
Harriet	364, 365, 366
*Kiss and Tell	356, 357, 358
Listen, Professor	190, 191, 192
Lovers and Friends	210, 211, 212
Merry Widow (The)	301, 302, 303
*Oklahoma	341, 342, 343
*One Touch of Venus	264, 265, 266
Othello	256, 257, 258
Outrageous Fortune	237, 238, 239
Something for the Boys	398, 399, 400
South Pacific	184, 185, 186
Three's a Family	328, 329, 330
Tomorrow the World	334, 335, 336
*Two Mrs. Carrolls (The)	304, 305, 306
Victory Belles	244, 245, 246
*Voice of the Turtle (The)	199, 200, 201, 202
What's Up	229, 230, 231
Winged Victory	216, 217, 218, 219
Ziegfeld Follies	338, 339, 340

1942 Vol.

Doughgirls (The)	124, 125, 126
Janie	244, 245, 246
Rosalinda	187, 188, 189

1941 Vol.

*Angel Street	182, 183, 184, 185
Arsenic and Old Lace	417, 418, 419, 420

1940 Vol.

*Life With Father	457, 458, 459

**Asterisks indicate shows scheduled to play week of November 21, 1944.*

THEATRE OPENINGS

"The Man Who Had All the Luck"
"Rhapsody"
"The Late George Apley"
"The Streets Are Guarded"

Complete reviews appear in this issue

Theatre Critics' Reviews brings you each week the complete reviews as they originally appeared in these New York newspapers

NEW YORK SUN
NEW YORK POST
NEW YORK TIMES
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
NEW YORK NEWSPAPER PM
NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN

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1944 PRODUCTIONS

Premieres During 1944

Reviews Appear in This Volume

STAGE PLAY	PAGE
According to Law	179
Allah Be Praised	207
*Anna Lucasta	143
*Bloomer Girl	118
Bright Boy	249
But Not Goodbye	220
Career Angel	184
*Catherine Was Great	134
Cherry Orchard (The)	276
*Chicken Every Sunday	232
Day Will Come (The)	136
Decision	265
Down to Miami	134
Dream With Music	188
Duke in Darkness (The)	279
Embezzled Heaven	97
*Follow the Girls	222
For Keeps	169
Good Morning Corporal	152
*Harvey	95
Helen Goes to Troy	201
Hickory Stick	190
Highland Fling (A)	198
House in Paris (The)	241
*I Remember Mama	111
*In Bed We Cry	86
Jackpot	284
*Jacobowsky and the Colonel	243
Last Stop	138
*Late George Apley (The)	77
Love on Leave	162
Lower North	146
Man Who Had All the Luck (The)	73
Meet a Body	116
Men to the Sea	124
*Mexican Hayride	271
Mrs. January and Mr. Ex	235
Mrs. Kimball Presents	254
No Way Out	100
Odds on Mrs .Oakley (The)	126
Only the Heart	230
Over Twenty-One	297
Peepshow	263
*Perfect Marriage (The)	104
Pick-Up Girl	194
Pretty Little Parlor	212
Public Relations	228
Ramshackle Inn	295
*Rhapsody	75
Right Next to Broadway	256
Robin Hood	91
*Sadie Thompson	84
*School for Brides	156
*Searching Wind (The)	217
Sheppey	209
Sleep My Pretty One	92
Sleep No More	142
Slightly Scandalous	172
*Snafu	106
*Soldier's Wife	121
*Song of Norway	149
*Star Time	132
Storm Operation	289
Strange Play (A)	179
*Streets Are Guarded (The)	79
Suds in Your Eye	287
Take a Bow	167
Take It As It Comes	261
*Ten Little Indians	160
Thank You, Svoboda	251
That Old Devil	177
Violet	109
Visitor (The)	114
Wallflower	274
While the Sun Shines	130

**Asterisks indicate shows scheduled to play week of November 21, 1944.*

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Theatre Critics' Reviews

New York

1944

"The Man Who Had All The Luck"

Play by Arthur Miller; staged by Joseph Fields; settings designed by Frederick Fox; presented by Herbert H. Harris at the Forrest Theater, November 23, 1944.

THE CAST

Shory	Grover Burgess
J. B. Feller	Forrest Orr
Hester Falk	Eugenia Rawls
David Beeves	Karl Swenson
Aunt Belle	Agnes Scott Yost
Patterson Beeves	Jack Sheehan
Amos Beeves	Dudley Sadler
Dan Dibble	Sydney Grant
Gustav Eberson	Herbert Berghof
Harry Bucks	James MacDonald
Augie Belfast	Lawrence Fletcher

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
November 24, 1944

P. S.—He Needed It

By HOWARD BARNES

SOME subtle meaning must lurk in the sprawling stanzas of "The Man Who Had All the Luck." It was certainly elusive in the presentation of this "new American play" by Arthur Miller at the Forrest Theater last night. There is quite a to-do about a baseball pitcher who cannot make the grade on the diamond because he has been relegated to a mushroom existence in a cellar. The fellow with the rabbit's foot is never quite certain whether he is destiny's tot or a total bust. An old codger in a wheel chair confesses that he got a military citation in 1918 because the roof of a brothel fell in on him and there is a refugee mechanic who talks excitedly about freedom and jellyfish. There are also a lot of off-stage mink.

• • •

Somewhere in this mess of pottage Miller must have hidden a kernal of philosophic truth. If so, he has picked the wrong medium to reveal it. For "The Man Who Had All the Luck" is incredibly turbid in its writing and stuttering in its execution. Through eight scenes set in a small mid-Western town "not so long ago," or in the era when the Marmon car was popular, the show writhes through an unpleasant, unexciting and downright mystifying maze. It never gets out of the maze, so far as entertainment is concerned. Perhaps the mink will give you a clew to the reason for its composition, if you can figure that one out.

• • •

The mink, it would seem, are the ultimate challenge to the hero's lucky streak, as he stakes his winnings on a garage in a mink ranch to keep all those beautiful girls warm. I wouldn't know. A baby is born in one of the scenes and nice old pappy goes off to seafaring after making a mushroom out of his ball-throwing second son. The players are understandably confused by the goings-on. None of them is good, while Karl Swenson, as the chap of the title, is downright bad.

More for the records than anything else, let it be noted that Grover Burgess tools around a bit frantically in the wheel chair; that Eugenia Rawls tries to play a straight role straight in a screwball plot with scant success and that Forrest Orr, Jack Sheehan, Dudley Sadler and Herbert Berghof remember their lines, whether or no they make any sense. The last-named actor has the Freedom speeches and delivers them with considerable eloquence, if little conviction. Joseph Fields, better-known as playwright than director, has had the uncomfortable task of staging "The Man Who Had All the Luck." He leaves it an uncomfortable show.

NEW YORK NEWSPAPER PM
November 24, 1944

A Big Problem, A Small Play

By LOUIS KRONENBERGER

THOUGH it fails to hit the right track, *The Man Who Had All the Luck* keeps—superficially at least—off the beaten one. In essense, Mr. Miller has written a problem play on that most enduring and most endlessly debated of problems: Can man be the master of his fate? His story-approach is a not too banal one; he has unfolded it through a character with whom he can deal on human, even homely, terms; and he has written scenes, at least, that have force and piquancy. The play is helped, moreover, by a very competent production. But, despite all this, *The Man Who Had All the Luck* is a far from satisfactory play. It is neither compelling enough as theater, nor significant enough, by a long shot, as drama.

Mr. Miller's fable is very simple; indeed, it is virtually told in the title. David Beeves is a young garage mechanic who—while people around him lead buffeted and broken existences—goes through life having everything, almost as though by a miracle, come his way. The sudden death of her hostile father lands him his girl. The nick-of-time assistance of a stranger paves the way for success in business. Time after time — not to be tedious about the plot—David's luck holds. The upshot, however, is that he becomes not cocky but frightened. Seeing better people always faring worse, and realizing that—in terms of his capacities—he far from deserves his luck, he comes to wish for trouble, almost as a form of chastisement. He comes, too, to believe that man is a jellyfish whose destiny lies out of his control. At this point the age-old debate about fate and free will gets going in so many words; but David's friends cannot reassure him. Only when he finds that he has averted a disaster by using his head does he change his mind.

Philosophically, all this wears too old-fashioned and contrived an air to add up to much. Nor does Mr. Miller's overt, didactic treatment improve matters. It is more, indeed, than didactic—it smells of a pep talk and winds up peddling pretty glib optimism. David's new faith precisely tallies with that hoary tag of Addison's:

'Tis not in mortals to command success,
But we'll do more, Sempronius; we'll deserve it.

So much for the message. The tale that flashes it is better though but patchily so. David's success story involves some mildly interesting garage detail, and some lively information about mink-breeding. His brother's failure to make the grade as a big-league pitcher offers a good scene in which a scout for the Tigers breaks the bad news. There are spots of nice dialogue and two or three well-handled characters. But much of the story, too, has an old-fashioned air; too little of it comes to life.

Karl Swenson plays David naturally and sympathetically, and Herbert Berghof plays a smarter but less successful garageman with considerable skill. Dudley Sadler does well, which isn't too easy, as the ballplayer, and Lawrence Fletcher is good as the scout. Mr. Fields' direction communicates all the vitality the play possesses; it just isn't enough.

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
November 24, 1944

'The Man Who Had All the Luck' A Good Try, But Is Out of Luck

By JOHN CHAPMAN

"THE MAN WHO HAD ALL THE LUCK" is about a fellow who tries a lot of things and they all click, but he keeps thinking that sooner or later something will flop because it stands to reason he's got to pay up in the end. Arthur Miller, the newcomer who wrote the play, has done all his paying-up right off the bat. His first offering tries a lot of things—too many by far—and most of them flop.

And now I hope Mr. Miller will go right back to work writing another piece, for he has a sense of theatre and a real if undeveloped way of making stage characters talk and act human.

There isn't much use in trying to detail what went on at the Forrest Theatre last night, for it would involve explaining about repairing a Marmon 8, about an embittered war veteran, about a goofy baseball pitcher, about the filling station business, about the hazards of raising mink and about a few other things, including the hazards of begetting a baby and delivering same.

Ballplayer Augie Best

Almost all these elements have something of interest in them—but they won't stick together and make a whole play. Mr. Miller would have been much happier today had he taken just one part of his plot—the part about the ballplayer—and made three acts of it.

For here is something true and touching—a little story about a big hunk of a kid whose father has trained him from babyhood to be a pitcher, and when the chance comes to get into the big leagues he fails because he is just a dumb lug who can throw a ball acurately. The doting father had never figured that brains as well as ball-throwing ability might be needed on the mound and had never trained his boy to think.

The role of the ballplayer is acted by another newcomer, Dudley Sadler, and Mr. Sadler is no less than splendid. Working nicely with him as the father is Jack Sheehan. But these two are only secondary characters, and all the others who appear upon the stage have a rather mixed-up time of it.

Karl Swenson acts "the man who had all the luck" with all the sincerity he can muster, but things get too much for him. Herbert Berghof is similary earnest but similarly floored in the role of an Austrian who comes to this country seeking freedom—but here we go again with some more plot. Less plot would have made "The Man Who Had All the Luck" more play.

NEW YORK TIMES
November 24, 1944

The Philosophy of Work Against Chance Makes Up 'The Man Who Had All the Luck'

THERE can be no doubt that as an evening in the theatre "The Man Who Had All the Luck" contains a certain amount of merit. There are some good performances and careful staging and one or two effective moments. The fact that they have not been multiplied is the new play's misfortune, for the author and director—Arthur Miller and Joseph Fields—at least have been trying to do something away from the theatre's usual stencils. But in the Forrest's current tenant they have not edited out the confusion of the script nor its somewhat jumbled philosophies, nor have they kept it from running over into the ridiculous now and then. "The Man Who Had All the Luck" can be set down as a play which tried, but which did not come off—through luck or whatever.

• • •

The discussion of "The Man Who Had All the Luck" is whether success springs from fortune or work, from divine plan about which it is useless to work, or from care. Mr. Miller takes as a central character an automobile mechanic. He wins his wife when her father, who hated him, is killed; he branches out in business when another mechanic happens along to show him how to fix a car he cannot repair. He gets a farm, he

wants children and has one, he starts a mink farm and that is successful also. His friends and others all suffer disasters, and he thinks his luck presently will change, too. That it does not, Mr. Miller concludes finally, is due to the fact that all the things which seemed to be luck were only just rewards for work and care.

The confusion of the play lies in the fact that Mr. Miller has been working on all sides of his argument, setting them forth and not going on to give proof. The man who had all the luck ends by deserving his success through the care he had taken, yet his brother, who had taken much more, fails. Luck, or good work, you get your choice. Added to the fact that the play sometimes is impossible to follow is the additional one that some of its situations are corny to the extreme. Mr. Miller has written some good dialogue in spots, but he also has not been innocent of the obvious. It also is possible the author has been reading Saroyan now and again, a few of the characters and situations being of that school, with Mr. Saroyan handling them better.

* * *

Karl Swenson is the man with the luck, and for the most part plays him very well. Until the end of the drama, when the philosophies begin whirling, he is quiet and at ease; that he finally whirls, also, probably is not his fault. Herbert Berghof has the role of a refugee mechanic and friend; he is a sort of mild Jacobowsky who introduces the philosophy of American freedom — which hasn't much bearing on the play. Dudley Sadler is the brother who has spent his life trying to be a big-league baseball pitcher, Jack Sheehan is excellent as the father, Eugenia Rawls is the bride. Mr. Fields has directed the play carefully, and such minor roles as that of Lawrence Fletcher, as a baseball scout, are nicely done. For one of the scenes Frederick Fox has designed a garage, complete with automobile.

"The Man Who Had All the Luck" lacks either the final care or the luck to make it a good play. But it has tried, and that is something.

NEW YORK POST
November 24, 1944

"The Man Who Had All the Luck"

By WILELLA WALDORF

"THE MAN WHO HAD ALL THE LUCK," produced at the Forrest Theatre last night, is identified in the program as "A New American Play by Arthur Miller." Since it is laid in a small Midwestern town and is not apt to be confused with anything French or Greek, Hindu or Chinese, the word "American" appears a bit superfluous until you suddenly realize, after a great deal of motor car repairing, baseball pitching and mink farming, that Mr. Miller is trying, in an earnest but muddled fashion, to state his idea of the American Credo.

Precisely what this is it is hard to say after seeing "The Man Who Had All the Luck," but according to the Viennese garage mechanic who came here to be his own master, it is using your own two hands, hands, hands and being free, free, free to work, work, work.

That, we hasten to state, is not a literal transcription of the play. It is simply an impression we had after listening to it for three addled acts. The title character was having mink trouble at the time and we were almost as unnerved as he was, especially since we had just about decided that the cynic in the wheel chair was probably right when he kept insisting that we're all jelly fish. Can't swim but just float with the tide. Everything's all mapped out, so why struggle?

The Man Who Had All the Luck just couldn't seem to lose. When he couldn't repair an ailing Marmon, a clever mechanic from Vienna by way of Detroit happened along and did it for him. When his girl's father set out to shoot him, the Marmon ran the old fellow down and killed him. When he bought a little filling station the State highway promptly went through. His wife had a bouncing son without mishap although she'd had a bad fall some time before. Then he buys a lot of mink . . .

By this time David Beeves begins to worry his head off because he is so lucky, while the rest of his family always has rotten breaks. Father, once a sailor, had been training brother Amos, a moron, to be a big-league pitcher in the cellar every winter and it was the wrong method. The scout from the Detroit Tigers finally tells them so.

Amos starts going to the dogs. Father starts back to sea. The lucky member of the family is sure he'll be in for reverses soon, but his mink aren't poisoned after all because it seems he had personally picked all the silk worms off the fish they ate. Do mink eat fish and do fish harbor silk worms that are poison to future fur coats?

Frankly, we couldn't say. We also are too dumb about baseball to know whether the Tigers' scout was right or wrong about Amos, although Mr. Wolcott Gibbs, the eminent sports authority on the New Yorker, says it's the catcher who's supposed to watch the bases, not the pitcher.

Anyhow, all this gives the author ample opportunity to mull over the problem of whether success is a matter of sheer luck or honest effort, and to become horribly confused in the process. There are a lot of ideas knocking around the stage of the Forrest but they are frittered away somewhere among the Marmons and the minks.

Herbert Berghof and Karl Swenson struggle valiantly to bring a little clarity to their parts, Dudley Sadler is very believeable as the pitcher who never made the big league, and Lawrence Fletcher talked so persuasively as the scout that we swallowed every word he said, despite Mr. Gibbs.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
November 24, 1944

Good Luck at the Forrest

By BURTON RASCOE

"THE MAN WHO HAD ALL THE LUCK," a very unusual kind of emotional drama by Arthur Miller, which opened at the Forrest last night, attacks with vigorous and intelligent dramatic skill what is probably the most prevalent of human superstitions—that all the good things which happen to you in life will necessarily be balanced by an equal number of bad things; that great calamity must inevitably follow a long streak of "good luck" or visa versa.

When you remember that one of Ralph Emerson's most famous essays, "On Compensation" (which is very highly regarded by academicians and liberal literati alike) propagates, in noble prose, this popular superstition and that Mr. Miller, in this play, also rationally combats the still prevalent ancient Greek idea of Fate and predestination, you will see that he has tackled a man's size job.

And, when I tell you he has tackled the job in very homely, naturalistic terms, in a situation involving average people in a small Midwestern town, and that there is nothing pretentious, arty or preachy about his play, and that (with me, at all events) he put over his argument in a faultlessly convincing manner, you will, I think, concur in my belief that this is a play you both need and want to see.

Realistic, Natural

"The Man Who Had All the Luck" is not only a touching, realistic play, with some especially fine characterizations in it, but, as I have stated, a play with a challenging new idea in it—something very rare in the theater. It is as American as an ice cream cone; and just as refreshing, emotionally and intellectually, as an ice cream cone on a hot day. It is a challenge to all the defeatism and self-pity of 19th century European literature and drama, from the Romanticists to the Surrealists and from Chekhov to O'Neill.

I shall not tell you any more about the plot than that it concerns two brothers, one an unschooled and untrained garage mechanic and the other a boy whom his father had concentrated upon since he was 10 years old to make the lad a big league baseball pitcher, and without belief in themselves (each in quite different ways) and how they were freed of their fears by experiences which taught them their ideas about "luck" were wrong.

Joseph Fields has chosen a flawless cast for this play and given it a very superior kind of direction. The settings by Frederick Fox are just right. The players are so good that it is almost unfair to say that Karl Swenson, Sydney Grant and Dudley Sadler stood out, because that is only to say their roles were juicy. Lawrence Fletcher, for instance, has only a three-minute bit in the second act and yet he was superb. The others, whose names are in the cast box, were fine, too.

This is not a play to knock you out of your seat, roll you in the aisles, cause you to dance in the street or throw your hat in the air. It is a much finer drama than that. It is an unique event.

NEW YORK SUN
November 24, 1944

'The Man Who Had All the Luck' is Folksy, Philosophical and Tiresome

By WARD MOREHOUSE

"THE MAN WHO HAD ALL THE LUCK," submitted last night at the Forrest by Herbert H. Harris, is Arthur Miller's first play and it reveals sincecity of purpose and some inexpert playwriting. It is an ambling piece, strangely confused at times and rather tiresome for a considerable portion of the evening.

The locale is a small Mid-Western town, the time not so long ago. David Beeves, who started with an automobile repair shop and who turned eventually to raising mink, is the man who had all the luck. His hulking brother, with yearnings to be a big league baseball pitcher, had none.

When the father of the girl David wants to marry is on his way to shoot him the old man is run over by an automobile. When David is stuck with a particularly tough repair job a better mechanic happens along and saves him in the emergency. When the new highway is opened its course is past David's shop. When David's wife is having a baby, David wants a boy—and gets it.

However, with all these things coming to him from out of the blue, he has always feared catastrophe; he has always been waiting for his luck to run out. And just when it seems that ruin has come to his mink farm his luck stays with him. It's here that Mr. Miller makes the point that David has always been a careful man, and an industrious one, and points the moral that a man's luck is what he makes it.

This new play has some engaging moments and several likable characters wander through it, but it has more than its share of sermonizing, particularly in the awkward third act, when the audiences becomes quite as confused as David is. Joseph Fields has helped the script along with his direction and Frederick Fox's settings are excellent.

Karl Swenson, from out of radio, has the role of David and plays it earnestly and strenuously. Grover Burgess, as a veteran of world war 1, prattles from a wheel chair about fate being in your stars. Herbert Berghof is the Austrian mechanic who helps David with the repair job and has a great deal to say about defeatism and luck and ability and America, the land of opportunity. Dudley Sadler brings his bulk to the part of David's luckless brother, of the You-know-me-Al look. He has a wonderful fast ball, but he's just a bum out there when men are on bases. Eugenia Rawls gives a good performance as David's young wife. Lawrence Fletcher is quite engaging as the big league scout. And both Jack Sheehan and Forrest Orr come through nicely.

"The Man Who Had All The Luck" is philosophical, languid and rambling. Perhaps Mr. Miller's luck will be better with his next one.

"Rhapsody"

Music by Fritz Kreisler; book by Leonard Louis Levinson and Arnold Sundegaard, based on an original story by A. N. Nagler; musical adaptation and arrangements by Russell Bennett; lyrics by John Latouche; additional lyrics by Russell Bennett and Blevins Davis; book and choreography staged by Oliver Smith; musical director, Fritz Mahler; presented by Blevins Davis, in association with Lorraine Manville Dresselhuys, at the Century Theatre, November 22, 1944.

THE CAST

Lotzi Hugenhaugen	John Cherry
Lili Hugenhaugen	Gloria Story
Charles Eckert	John Hamill
Frau Tina Hugenhaugen	Bertha Belmore
Ilse Bonen	Patricia Bowman
Greta, a maid	Mildred Jocelyn
Casanova	Eddie Mayehoff
Madame Boticini	Rosemarie Brancato
Demi-tasse	Alvin Johnson
Ivan	George Zoritch
Sonya	Alexandra Denisova
Emperor Francis I	George Young
Empress Maria Theresa	Annamary Dickey
Captain of the Palace Guard	Randolph Symonette
Rickshaw Man	Nicolas Beriozoff
The Dandy	Jerry Ross
Jailer	Robert W. Kirland

NEW YORK POST
November 24, 1944

"Rhapsody"

By WILELLA WALDORF

IN the course of his long and distinguished career, Fritz Kreisler has composed some lovely music. The notion of using part of it as the basis of a new Viennese operetta sounds enchanting, but "Rhapsody," which opened a Broadway engagement at the Century Theatre on Wednesday evening, is a ponderous, pretentious, preposterous mess.

Weighed down by an appalling book involving court intrigue in Vienna during the reign of the Empress Maria-Theresa, it is so clumsily staged that everybody in it appears at a disadvantage. Rosemarie Brancato and Annamary Dickey, sopranos of the coloratura and lyric variety, respectively, can and do sing, though not as much as some of the others, and the lyrics often have the faintly nauseous, coyly leering quality of the book, which tries desperately to be smart and succeeds only in being laboriously smutty and monumentally dull.

David Lichine employs the services of a large corps de ballet headed by Patricia Bowman, George Zoritch and Alexandra Denisova, but his choreography, while elaborate, is generally uninspired and the ballets themselves have next to nothing to do with the operetta.

Eddie Mayehoff, Bertha Belmore and John Cherry struggle desperately to provide comedy when there isn't any, and Miss Belmore, who is large and beefy, is required to don a ballerina's costume and try to get laughs with some flatfooted pirouettes.

The for-the-most-part familiar Kreisler music—"Caprice Viennois," "The Old Refrain," etc., etc.—is there, plus a stirring number called "When Men Are Free," with some typical John LaTouche lyrics, that is out of place in "Rhapsody" but welcome nevertheless. The orchestra under Fritz Mahler plays well.

But even Kreisler music can't rescue "Rhapsody."

NEW YORK SUN
November 24, 1944

"Rhapsody"

By WARD MOREHOUSE

THE operetta "Rhapsody," finally had its premiere at the Century Theater Wednesday evening after numerous postponements, but perhaps it should never have opened at all. This new production comes along with a Fritz Kreisler score and the dreariest book within memory, which is saying a lot.

There is a lack of integration, as well as professional showmanship, about the whole costly venture and it gives every indication of being a theatrical calamity of major proportions.

The score represents an assembling and a grouping of Kreisler tunes and some of the music is well sung. But it is apparent that the producers were fairly desperate to find a story to go with the tunes, and they've settled for a libretto that tells of plottings and intrigue on the Emperor's birthday during the reign of Maria Theresa. It was only one day out of the life of the Empress and her court, but it was a long one for first-nighters at the Century.

The attempts at comedy in "Rhapsody" are painful. Practically all of the laughter in the Century at the premiere was on the stage, and it came by cue. Eddie Mayehoff, in the role of Casanova, has a dreadful time with his material, as does Bertha Belmore, who was very amusing, you'll recall, in "By Jupiter." Along toward the middle of Act Two the book is quietly forgotten, the production goes in for a pretty Midnight Ballet, and then the finale.

The handsome Annamary Dickey brings her Metropolitan voice and presence to the role of Maria Theresa and is all right indeed—so long as she is singing. Her "Happy Ending" number is particularly well done. Also, "The World Is Young Again." John Hamill is strong vocally and gets some results with "When Men Are Free," sung with an ensemble. Rosemarie Brancato sings well, and so does Gloria Storey, but both are overpowered by plotty portions of the book.

Patricia Bowman and George Zoritch are present to lead the ballet numbers. Jerry Ross has an excellent acrobatic dance and there is an attractive and colorful "May Wine Polka" folk number, done by the corps de ballet and ensemble.

There are some dazzling costumes in this new production and some massive settings, definitely on the ponderous side. Mr. Kreisler's music, for all its merit, can't bring life to this latest operetta with a Viennese locale. For "Rhapsody" is a show with no book, no comedy, no comedians. Considering all of its postponements and its weeks of rehearsals, the financial investment has probably been enormous.

I fear that it is all a very great mistake.

NEW YORK NEWSPAPER PM
November 23, 1944

High Styled But Low Grade

By LOUIS KRONENBERGER

FOR Fritz Kreisler's operetta of life at the court of Maria Theresa they have emptied the royal coffers, sold the Empress' tiara and stomacher and probably levied heavy taxes on the peasants. With the resulting mound of cash they have got opulent and elegant sets, rich and multi-colored costumes, some good dancers, some good singers, a large corps de ballet, and all the other trappings of a splurgy musical. But they have got them in vain. Despite Mr. Kreisler's pleasing if rather dated romantic score, *Rhapsody* suffers from all the ills that old-fashioned and overripe operetta is heir to. It has lavishness without style, and fanfare that ushers in folderol. Its choreography too often misuses talent to produce stage-show fancy business. Few of its performers can act, and its book would curdle the millennium.

The whole thing seems a blunder in design as well as detail. One needn't be a purist to wonder why Kreisler's schmaltzy, pretty-pretty tunes that would fit nicely enough into the pastry-shop and Wienerwald Vienna of the late 19th century should be mated to the high-classical Schoenbrunn of perukes and minuets. But Kreisler's music not only evokes a different century; it also evokes different sentiments. It should have been fitted, without pretentiousness, into a milieu less glittering and more gay, a world of waltzes and light romance. It is nice enough music of its kind, tuneful and sweet, though not much varied and pretty often familiar. *Caprice Viennois*, *Rosemarin* and what is down in the program as *The World Is Young Again* are the whole world's dinner music; and the rest of the score, very little of which is new, could as well be. But Mr. Kreisler, let me make plain, comes off the hero of the evening.

The book—a farrago of palace intrigue in which Casanova figures as the villian — is really dreadful. I have seldom heard (or even uttered) such pune as made their way across the footlights; the gags were pretty much on a par with them; while the more dramatic moments aspired to the grandiloquence of the tumbril and the scaffold.

As for the dancing, Mr. Lichine, a good choreographer, has too often gone wedding-cake and Broadway. He comes off fine in a big first-act folk dance that has great color and verve; but his Chinese ballet seemed to me distressingly cute, and grand ballroom number too fancy. All this is the more unfortunate since in Patricia Bowman, Alexandra Denisova and George Zóritch *Rhapsody* has dancers who technically do themselves proud.

In Annamary Dickey, John Hamill and others, *Rhapsody* has good operetta voices, too, along with some that are not so good. Among the other performers, Gloria Story makes an attractive ingenue, though her voice is too light. Eddie Mayehoff is saddled with Casanova's villainies; and Bertha Belmore has to gulp down the largest portion of the comedy. Two or three of Oliver Smith's sets are very good, as are some of Frank Bevan's costumes; and Russell Bennett has done the orchestrations with his usual savvy. But the talent in *Rhapsody* is sadly wasted, the thing sinks under its own weight, a travesty not only of court life but often of grand-scale operetta as well.

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
November 23, 1944

'Rhapsody' Has a Kreisler Score, Good Players and an Awful Book

By JOHN CHAPMAN

BEING a reporter, even in the theatre, is not an easy job, for you are supposed to cover all the facts and state them even if you would like to suppress a few. In reporting upon "Rhapsody," which opened at the Century Theatre, I wish I could skip a few paragraphs and dwell only upon many pleasant things, leaving the horrible word "but" out of the whole business.

We could talk about Fritz Kreisler—gallant, lovable, great soul who has melody in his heart and music at his masterful fingertips. Kreisler's music makes the score of "Rhapsody" and he was in the front row last night, beaming good-will at every one upon the stage.

We could talk about the dances and the dancers — dances staged by David Lichine which are the best in any musical show this season because they are not too dreadfully arty, and dancers like Patricia Bowman, who has more knowledge and skill than half the prima ballerinas who have assumed Russian names.

We could and will talk about the Metropolitan Opera's Annamary Dickey, who has beauty and style and a voice; and about Rosemarie Brancato, who also has presence and can sing.

Fine Settings

We should also talk about Oliver Smith's acts — among them a brooding red prison scene which has the heroic quality many a grand opera deserves but never gets, and a mirror-lined, many-arched, crystal-hung setting for a final ballet which is stunning.

The word "but" should never get in. "Rhapsody" is beautiful, expensive and made of the best materials and intentions—but its book and its lyrics are so quaintly awful that I am afraid the show cannot survive them long. There is such a mixture of characters, ranging from the Emperor Francis I and his consort Maria Theresa to a comedy-size Casanova, and they do such silly things that you begin to believe you are seeing a burlesque of every old operetta from "Mlle. l'Archiduc" to "The Merry Widow."

The Kreisler melodies include many of his familiar ones, like "Caprice Viennois," and there is an excellent orchestra under Fritz Mahler to play them. Most striking among the solo dances are "The Dandy's Polka," done by a lad named Jerry Ross, and Alexandra Denisova's maneuvers around a large roulette wheel.

But the plot, and the lines, and the comedy aren't any good. These are by Leonard Louis Levinson, Arnold Sundgaard and A. N. Nagler. Most of the lyrics are by John Latouche.

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN
November 24, 1944

'Rhapsody' Opens At Century Theatre

By ROBERT GARLAND

THEY—meaning one body by the name of of Blevins Davis and another body by the name of Lorraine Manville Dresselhuys, no less—decided at long last to open "Rhapsody" evening before last at the Century Theatre. Why, you'll not learn from me. In all my lengthy theatre-going days, I'm yet to behold such an off-stage misdemeanor. As an example of what money can't do, it's a masterpiece. Although this may sound impossible, it manages to live down to the rumors which preceded its exposure.

I forget how many hundred thousand dollars were spent on "Rhapsody" before it was put on public view at Al Jolson's old and refurbished showhouse. Did I say "spent?" Well, squandered would be the better word. Everything that could be wrong is wrong about it. Especially the libretto. That, believe me, is incredible, dealing dully with Madame Pompadour and, of all people, Casanova. And the music, the Fritz Kreisler music, is far too sweet, far too familiar and far too schmaltzy.

Not in all my on-the-aisle-seated days has a big time theatrical production been so misbegotten, so flat-footed, so pretentious. If I could have my way, "Rhapsody" and almost everybody connected with it would go around to Cain's Storehouse and stand in a corner for the next hundred years.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
November 24, 1944

Bad Luck at the Century

By BURTON RASCOE

IN musical comedy the book is unimportant and usually lost sight of amid the comic skits, the dance specialists, the singing personalities and the climatic ensembles. But in romantic operetta, such as the one for which Russell Bennett has lovingly arranged and adapted Fritz Kreisler's charming musical compositions and called "Rhapsody," you can be made painfully aware of the book. If it is bad it sticks out like a goiter.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is the sad case of "Rhapsody" as it was presented on Wednesday evening at the Century. There had been several postponements of the show. But they decided to put it on anyhow. The worst doubts of the management were confirmed. There were encores for several refrains and the ballet principals were made happy by a claquelike applause. But otherwise the audience response was ghastly. The walkers-out were legion.

The production has its points. First is the presence therein of Bertha Belmore, one of the original Tiller Girls of dance-hall fame, now a veritable Juno Tonala of a woman, not only a great comedienne but a dancer of amazing grace (remember her taps with Ray Bolger in "By Jupiter"?); but she is given, like the others, preposterous, stenciled lines to speak and thus can amuse only when she is burlesquing the instructions of an ancient battle ax of a ballet mistress. Eddie Mayhoff, a good comic with his own stuff, has the other comedy role, as Casanova, but is utterly defeated by the rubbishly chore he is given to do.

Then there are: Gloria Story, a pretty girl with dimples to whose sweet voice are intrusted several songs, including the familiar "My Rhapsody"; Annamary Dickey of the Met, who sings the famous "Caprice Viennoise" in a way to compare favorably with Kreisler's own rendition on the violin; Patricia Bowman and Alexandra Denisova, beautiful ballet primas of unusual elasticity and skill; Jerry Ross, a specialty dancer, who has an extraordinary leap in which both feet touch the back of his head; George Zoritch, the ballet dancer who made such a hit in "Early to Bed"; John Hamill, who sings "When All Men Are Free" in a rousing manner; the musical arrangements by Russell Bennett, a good orchestra under the baton of Fritz Mahler, and that's about all. The material is not integrated into decent form.

The production is offered by Blevins Davis and Lorraine Manville Dresselhuys; book by Leonard Louis Levinson and Arnold Sundgaard, based on a story by A. N. Nagler; lyrics by John Latouche. Mr. Bennett and Mr. Davis; costumes by Frank Bevan. Time: The reign of the Empress Theresa of Austria. Place: Vienna.

NEW YORK TIMES
November 23, 1944

Fritz Kreisler's Tunes Offer the Only Good Deeds to Pretty Dismal Playing of 'Rhapsody'

By LEWIS NICHOLS

AN active legislation should prevent those responsible for "Rhapsody" from ever again listening to nice Viennese tunes as they sip their beer. Understanding clearly has gone from them. For the operetta which opened at the Century last evening they took a group of Fritz Kreisler's waltzing little songs and by dint of a top-heavy and weighty production turned the whole into as pretentious and dull a matter as can be imagined. Where Mr. Kreisler's contributions called for gaiety, sparkle and charm "Rhapsody" on the whole clumped along in hob-nailed heavy boots. The songs still are there and one day some one may write an operetta around them; "Rhapsody" definitely is not it.

* * *

With the exception of the music, practically everything that could be wrong is wrong with the new operetta. Basing the book on a story by A. N. Nagler, Leonard Louis Levinson and Arnold Sundgaard have thrown out words that are practically incredible. Operetta books at times are slow; the one of "Rhapsody" is to all intents and purposes the immovable object. Set in the eighteenth century, with figures of the Emperor Francis I, the Empress Maria Theresa and, of all people, Casanova, the book probably could strangle an evening without any assistance from elsewhere. But it has even that.

Both the book and the dances have been directed by David Lichine. The chances are no one could do more than shudder when faced with the former, but Mr. Lichine's steps all have a sameness about them, they all lack sparkle, their groupings are formal rather than gay. With a cast including such singers as Rosemarie Brancato and Annamary Dickey, one or two of the important songs are intrusted to voices which cannot be heard. And over all towers a ponderous production of mirrors, chandeliers, lights, backgrounds stretching roughly to the infinity of the Century Theatre. In it the "Caprice Viennois" and the others are as lost as bubbles in the ocean.

* * *

Besides the "Caprice," the songs include other familiar ones from Mr. Kreisler's list, plus a bit of music from his operetta, "Sissy," which never has been shown here, and a new waltz. Russell Bennett has arranged them, supplying the orchestrations for the large and expert band in the pit. The lyrics are by John LaTouche, with additional credits to Mr. Bennett and Blevins Davis. Playing two of the leading roles, the Misses Brancato and Dickey obviously are in there trying; they know the proper usages of nice tunes, even though "Rhapsody" is not the place. Patricia Bowman is the chief dancer, Eddie Mayehof the chief comic—this is playing in a void if ever there was one—and Gloria Story and John Hamill are the juveniles. A young man named Jerry Ross gives a good acrobatic dance, and there are two numbers which well might be put into that next Kreisler operetta, when written. One is the "May Wine Polka," a crowded, cheerful and active dance; the other, "When Men Are Free," which hasn't anything to do with "Rhapsody" but is all right.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
November 23, 1944

Violin Without Strings

By HOWARD BARNES

THE new operetta, "Rhapsody," is expansive and expensive. It is far from exhilirating. Fritz Kreisler melodies have been woven cunningly into a score by Russell Bennett and the tunes serve both singers and dancers well, but the show has no more direction than a becalmed box kite. What passes for a book at the New Century Theater establishes something of a low for libretto fabrication. Since the story consumes an unconscionable amount of time in this Blevins Davis-Lorraine Manville Dresselhuys production, it rarely takes off anywhere.

* * *

There is no lack of performing in "Rhapsody" and much of it is excellent. Annamary Dickey, as Empress Maria Theresa, and George Young, as Francis, collaborate on some eloquent fancy-dress vocalizing. Gloria Story and John Hamill, portraying a couple of lovers in old Vienna, sing out strongly and there is all sorts of tricky dancing by Patricia Bowman, George Zoritch, Nicolas Berizoff and Jerry Ross, culminating in a spectacular and eye-filling ballet climax. What shouldn't happen to a dog happens to the straight players in the offering, what with the material they have at hand.

* * *

Eddie Mayehoff, for example, has a thankless role as Casanova, delivering as banal lines as you will often hear in a professional theatrical exhibit. John Cherry and Bertha Belmore wander around through an interminable first act and then are given a major break by being forgotten. The point is that there is merely a suggestion of anything dramatic in "Rhapsody." It boasts a clutter of cliches which would stop better performers than any of the aforementioned troupers. One unfortunate actress is asked to refer to Casanova as "a perpetual emotion machine." It is a high point in the show's humor.

* * *

The music should prove familiar, deriving from the celebrated fiddler's concert compositions as well as his "Sissy," done some years ago abroad. Bennett has made it effective alike for songfests and ballet numbers. The title song is excellent and so is "Because You're Mine." The "Caprice Viennois" gives a great lift to the finale. David Lichine has staged the choreography brilliantly, particularly the Midnight Ballet, although he might have contrived a bit more variety in his routining of the numbers. His direction of the book is as bad as the book itself, which is saying plenty. A handful of songs and a ballet or two scarcely suffice for so pretentious an undertaking as "Rhapsody."

"The Late George Apley"

Play by John P. Marquand and George S. Kaufman, based on Mr. Marquand's novel of the same name; staging by Mr. Kaufman; settings by Stewart Chaney; presented by Max Gordon at the Lyceum Theater, November 21, 1944.

NEW YORK SUN
November 22, 1944

'The Late George Apley', Delightful Comedy—and Max Gordon Has a Hit

By WARD MOREHOUSE

THE comedy of manners, something seemingly gone from the American theater, returned last night via "The Late George Apley," an urbane, literate and completely charming play. Max Gordon presents it at the Lyceum and has cause today for jubilation. The Apleys will be around for a long, long time.

Here is a play representing a combination of the talents of John P. Marquand, novelist; George S. Kaufman, playwright and director, and Leo G. Carroll, actor, and the result is something to cheer about. The Messrs. Marquand and Kaufman, in their collaboration, have brought forth a comedy of Boston and Bostonians and of the Apleys of Beacon street that is gently ironic and affectionately satirical. And Mr. Carroll, in the title role, is superb.

The play is a portrait of a man, a family and a city, but chiefly a portrait of George Apley of Harvard and class-conscious Beacon Hill, devoted to his clubs, to caste and to bird lore, head of a distinguished family and generally untouched and uncomprehending of the challenge of a changing world. He is the kind of man he is because his environment has prevented his being anything else. He has given a lifetime to doing unimportant things.

The story of this comedy, based on Mr. Marquand's novel, is slight. The time is 1912, Thanksgiving Day. In three acts and an epilogue the authors depict the revolt of the son (Harvard, of course) and daughter of the Apleys. Eleanor Apley is seeing a young lecturer who got his education at Yale, of all places, and who is disparaging of Emerson. John is in love with a girl who lives in Worcester, the very name of which causes George Apley to shudder, and her manufacturing father is in the dye business. There's scrollwork on the porch of her house and iron animals in the front yard. Under pressure from a realistic brother-in-law, George Apley begins to yield, only to have himself put straight by the outspoken father of the girl from Worcester, who rejects the notion of a marriage. He reminds George Apley that different kinds of people can't mix. Eleanor has her way, but John is taken abroad and when revealed in the epilogue in the sacred confines of the Berkley Club, 1924, he is a counterpart of the late George Apley. And married to Cousin Agnes, as things were meant to be.

The play is filled with warming chuckles. And delightful touches, both in speech and direction. Revealing little things that reflect the rigidity of the Apleys' Beacon street background, the inflexibility of George Apley's social routine. The dialogue has both wit and substance and George Kaufman, to my notion, has contributed one of his finest directorial jobs.

Leo G. Carroll gives a distinguished performance of the Bostonian who is a creature of his environment. He brings dignity, suavity, austerity and humor to the role of the man who leans heavily upon the writings of Emerson and Thoreau. Janet Beecher plays Catherine Apley with gentleness and dignity. The session of her embroidery circle provides one of the play's delightful interludes. Percy Waram is engaging and believable as the brother-in-law. Margaret Dale comes through with another sharp characterization as the caustic sister Amelia. There are good performances, too, from David McKay, as young John Apley; from Joan Chandler, as daughter Eleanor, and certainly from Howard St. John, the father from Worcester, with a Kansas City background, to whom it was apparent that a union with the Apleys wouldn't do. Stewart Chaney's period costumes, as of 1912, are wonderful, and so is his setting for George Apley's house in Beacon street.

"The Late George Apley" is delightful theater, brilliantly produced. It's a family-life play that will be relished by playgoers (Bostonians included) who have enjoyed "Life With Father." Max Gordon has his hit and the Lyceum, the house that Dan Frohman built, has its play for the rest of this season. And probably all of next.

THE CAST

Margaret	Mrs. Priestly Morrison
George Apley	Leo G. Carroll
Catherine Apley	Janet Beecher
John Apley	David McKay
Eleanor Apley	Joan Chandler
Wilson	Byron Russell
Amelia Newcombe	Margaret Dale
Roger Newcombe	Percy Waram
Horatio Willing	Reynolds Evans
Jane Willing	Catherine Proctor
Agnes Willing	Margaret Phillips
Howard Boulder	John Conway
Lydia Leyton	Ivy Troutman
Emily Southworth	Mabel Acker
Julian H. Dole	Howard St. John
Henry	Sayre Crawley

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN
November 22, 1944

'Late George Apley' At Lyceum Theatre

By ROBERT GARLAND

THERE'S another happy hit on Broadway. This is the John P. Marquand-George S. Kaufman dramatization of "The Late George Apley," Mr. Marquand's Pulitzer prize-winning novel published in 1937. In its present form, translated from the library onto the stage, it is an evening of sheer delight, wise, witty and enchantingly satirical. It puts Boston in its place, making no Back Bay bones about it. When play bites Boston, that's news!

It is Max Gordon who makes the news, having brought "The Late George Apley" into the lovely old Lyceum, with settings and costumes out of Stewart Chaney's upper drawer, direction out of George S. Kaufman's better judgment and a cast that is the answer to any playwright's prayers. The result is one more "must" on the new season's increasing "must list," along with "Soldier's Wife," "I Remember Mama," "Harvey" and night before last's "The Streets Are Guarded."

On second thought, I'd better keep "The Streets Are Guarded" out of this, substituting "Anna Lucasta," instead. For, as extraordinary as the Laurence Stallings play may be, it most certainly is no comedy. For the most part the others are.

Eight Apley Days

At the Lyceum, you review no more than eight days out of George Apley's life. The quintessence of Mr. Apley, as it were! You meet him in his Beacon st. house on Thanksgiving Day, 1912. You take leave of him the following Friday morning. But, in so short a time, he has become bewitched, bothered and bewildered by the curiously non-Back Bay goings-on of his dull son, John, and his darling daughter, Eleanor.

Against all the best Boston traditions, the former insists upon falling in love with a girl from Worcester, while the latter takes up with a New Yorker from Greenwich Village. The girl from Worcester has a father with an iron deer in his front yard. The man from Greenwich Village has a volume of Freud in his private library. So George Apley, who is not then "late," puts up a fight to save his John and his Eleanor from anti-Bostonian peridition.

Surrounded and assisted by his wife, his sisters, his cousins and his aunts, New Englanders all, he both wins and loses. The boy gives in, falling into the old Apley Beacon st. tradition. But the girl gets out, moving to New York with her iconoclast and his "Psychoanalysis."

Bostonian as Bean

Which gives you the merest outline of a satiric and detail-studded comedy. As acted out last night in the presence of an amused and constantly applauding congregation, "The Late George Apley" is replete with bright and brittle touches which are, of a certainty, Mr. Kaufman's, and delicious and deprecatory digs at Boston which are, of a certainty, Mr. Marquand's. Between them they have fun, adult and engaging. So do you!

Truly, the cast that puts this over is the answer to a playwright's prayers. Leo G. Carroll is of a truth the George Apley who speaks only with Lowells, Cabots and God. Janet Beecher, as wife Catherine; David McKay as son John and Joan Chandler as daughter Eleanor, are as Bostonian as a bean. The others, especially Margaret Dale as Amelia Newcombe, and Margaret Phillips, a comparative newcomer—I saw her in "Cry Havoc"—as Agnes Willing. . . .

"The Late George Apley" is high-comedy with a bite, adroitly dramatized from a fine American novel, staged with every excellence the modern showshop has to offer, acted to perfection. In other and fewer words, Max Gordon has another good one on his hands.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
November 22, 1944

'The Late George Apley' a Civilized Comedy

By BURTON RASCOE

IN a season already opulent in new theatrical offerings, you must now, most certainly, add "The Late George Apley" to the plays you ought to see. Definitely a must. You will be sure of enjoying a charming, civilized comedy, rich in wit, humor and irony, enacted by a perfect cast of players against a background that is authentic as well as an esthetic pleasure. The play is current at the Lyceum, where it opened last night before an enraptured and merry audience. It will be there quite a spell.

This is the comedy which John P. Marquand and George S. Kaufman have fashioned out of Mr. Marquand's Pulitzer Prize winning novel of the same title. The Kaufman touch is upon it; but, happily, in this instance, the famed wisecracker has been restrained in the application of the metallic Kaufman glitter, as much by his own awe of the Brahmin tradition, perhaps, as by Mr. Marquand's gentle insistence that his portrait of the Apleys, if not more in the Stuart than in the Copley manner, at least is more Sargent than Arno.

The essential tragic sub-acid irony of the story is not lost; but the sympathetic implications of the novel are subordinated to the broader theatrical effects of comic satire. And this, for the theater, is all to the good; for it results in the audience's enjoying a great deal of laughter (of a abdominal as well as cerebral kind) and still getting a pretty deep impression of the pathos and human waste involved in a too strict adherence to a tribal code of duties, obligations and taboos when one hasn't the courage or the enterprise to follow one's heart.

Carroll Splendid

At several points I think Mr. Kaufman has strained a bit too hard for laughs of a distinctly low burlesque type, as in his too frequent reiteration of variations of the old gag "What are Yonkers?" or "Are you an American citizen?—No, I live in Brooklyn." He has George Apley express astonishment, in turn, that anybody should be from Worcester, Yale, New York or Kansas City. The gag is good when it is used once or twice,

as in the more subtle reference to the Copley-Plaza. . . . But people laugh heartily at these things as well as at the more ingenious and delicate comedy lines; so, I suppose, what's the difference?

At any rate it is an enriching and enjoyable show. Leo G. Carroll turns in a masterpiece of a performance as George Apley, blending his comical characterization of a lamentable stuff-shirt with just enough touches of dignity and pathos to make the portrait seem warmly human and not a caricature; you laugh loud and often at what George Apley says and the way he says it, but it is sympathetic laugh at the quaint limitations of the man's outlook and interests, not at the man himself.

Janet Beecher shows to more sympathetic advantage than any role I have ever seen her in; Catherine Proctor, simply by staring into space with a woebegone look, manages to be one of the biggest comic hits of the evening; Percy Waram, as the one realist and unorthodox member (by marriage) of the Apley clan, is a mighty effective leavening figure; Margaret Dale, as the most imperious and self-righteous of the Apleys, is shrilly comical; Joan Chandler, as the young daughter, is beauteous and has one bit, where she is slightly lit, that is superb; John Conway is just brash enough as the young "radical;" Margaret Phillips is properly wan and ethereal as the young female victim of the Beacon Street tradition, and, indeed, every member of the cast is chosen with accuracy and expertly coached. The limpid, rather than excited, timing of the dialogue is perfect. And Stewart Chaney, for the sets and costumes, deserves all the Chinese bronzes in the Apley collection with a couple of Stuarts thrown in.

The tale tells, as you know, of the effect of the tradition of the rights and obligations of primogeniture (imported from the British aristocratic tradition) upon the male line of Bostonians of wealth and social position; and how the spell of this tradition destroyed the romantic love of two generations of Apleys and left them pleasant, well-behaved, dutiful zombies, pathetically devoted to the picayune activities and interests which their station in life compelled them; and of the escape of a daughter into a freer, happier, more productive existence. The play is a beautiful wreath laid on the grave of a tradition that once had some merit in it, though it seems pathetically foolish and comical to us now.

NEW YORK POST
November 22, 1944

'The Late George Apley'—Merry Comedy About Boston

By WILELLA WALDORF

JOHN P. MARQUAND and George S. Kaufman have made a play out of Mr. Marquand's novel. "The Late George Apley" that ought to have little trouble running as long as "Life With Father." Produced last night at the Lyceum with Leo G. Carroll as the head of one of Boston's first families, it presents a picture of Beacon Street aristocracy that is genuinely comic in the best theatrical sense.

Nothing much happens in "The Late George Apley." It is the dialogue and performance that count. There is quality in the writing, and wit and style. Mr. Kaufman has directed with an eye for detail and a keen ear for just the proper inflection to bring out the laughs, and the result is a highly satisfactory evening with the Apleys back in the intensely respectable days of 1912.

It is not easy in a play of this kind to keep the performance from slopping over into burlesque at odd moments, and there were times last night when one or two of the company showed a tendency to carry on a bit with one eye on the gallery, but on the whole Mr. Kaufman kept a tight rein on the proceedings and permitted the comedy to ripple out quite naturally from the assembled Bostonians in Beacon Street.

No Aliens Wanted

Not having read Mr. Marquand's novel, we cannot say how closely it follows the original, but it is astonishing how much amusement Mr. Marquand and Mr. Kaufman manage to squeeze out of what actually amounts to one joke—the fact that the Apleys and their friends regard Boston as the only place on earth fit to live in and are inclined to look askance at the rest of the country as foreign territory.

When young John Apley falls madly in love with a girl named Myrtle, who lives in Worcester, the blow is almost more than his father can bear! But George Apley doesn't want to be narrow-minded. After a struggle, he reaches a noble decision.

"Worcester isn't Boston," he reflects, "but it is in Massachusetts."

The Apleys also have trouble with their daughter, Eleanor, who has taken to running around with a Yale man, of all people. The foreigner not only comes from New York (Greenwich Village, no less) but also gives lectures at Harvard on "The Concord Myth," actually making fun of some of Ralph Waldo Emerson's poetry. Under this baleful influence Eleanor takes to reading Freud and the book is duly perused by her father, who finally reports:

"It seems to be Dr. Freud's idea that sex largely governs the lives of people—in other parts of the country."

Leo G. Carroll is an unfailing delight as George Apley, with Percy Waram equally felicitous as his easy-going, broader minded brother-in-law — friends since they went through Harvard together. David McKay plays rebellious John Apley pleasantly and acquires a quick Beacon Street veneer for the epilogue, which takes place after George Apley has become "The Late."

Margaret Dale overstresses some of her comedy lines in an effort to fling them into the teeth of the audience. Janet Beecher hovers around the edges of the play being helpful when the occasion arises, and there is good work by Catherine Proctor, Reynolds Evans, Margaret Phillips, Joan Chandler and John Conway in a generally well rounded cast. Stewart Chaney has decorated and dressed the play in the elegantly conservative styles of 1912.

THE NEW YORK TIMES
November 22, 1944

"The Late George Apley"

By LEWIS NICHOLS

FROM the state of mind that exists at the other end of the New Haven Railroad, John P. Marquand and George S. Kaufman have fashioned one of the fall's cheerful and amiable evenings. "The Late George Apley," it is called, and it is a liberalized, or perhaps Broadwayized, version of the Pulitzer Prize novel which a few years ago sent Bostonians to looking reflectively in their mirrors. Composed like a cocktail with ingredients of Mr. Marquand's Back Bay atmosphere and Mr. Kaufman's Times Square gags, the Lyceum's new comedy has the further advantage of offering Leo G. Carroll what is likely the best part he will ever get. Mr. Carroll from this point on will be George Apley, and a credit to the name.

* * *

His performance is a wonderful one. The part of Apley easily could become caricature, but Mr. Carroll will have none of that. He plays the role honestly and softly; with a few gestures he suggests the disasters which constantly threaten the peace of Beacon Street. He has the dignity required of the elders of Boston, and when Apley decides that perhaps his life has not been completely successful, Mr. Carroll can change easily to that mood. He is unhurried and calm, bringing out all the sides of the character, from the Apley who worries about the little triumphs which are perhaps not so foolish in Boston, to taking a drink at 9 o'clock in the morning, which is foolish nowhere. Boston may be needing a new Mayor one day, and it could do worse than keep Mr. Carroll in mind. He will be working here for quite a time in the meanwhile.

The play itself is a little uneven, like the lives of the Apleys themselves. As in "Life With Father," not a great deal happens. There is an incident about the election of a new president of the Bird Watchers, and that about Cousin Hattie's burial in the wrong part of the Apley plot. What story there is beyond these scattered reports of events elsewhere concerns the efforts of the two children to marry away from Beacon Hill. The first act is excellent, but some parts of the last two lag a bit, and when the late George is not about they lag even more. Unlike the book, the play shows Apley telling his son of his own early love affair, a scene which is not the evening's best.

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Since the Messrs. Marquand and Kaufman presumably think alike about all things, it is impossible—and, of course, quite unnecessary—to tell where one stops and the other begins. Both have at least read "The Late George Apley," and the general mood of Boston of 1912, as seen through the proper eyes, is still there. But something has been added, also. In a discussion of Freud is this one, more Broadway than Luisburg Square: "Sex largely governs the lives of people—in other parts of the country." And this, during a discussion of the Apley family dentist, who is "so old he can't see the cavities"—"No, but he is very good if you find your own." Times Square still has some tricks.

In addition to Mr. Carroll, "The Late George Apley" has some other players. As Mrs. Apley there is Janet Beecher, who plays that role quietly; and as the pessimistic and cynical Roger Newcombe there is Percy Waram. Mr. Waram knows his way about a Boston drawing room as well as the next man. Reynolds Evans has the thankless task of playing the caricatured figure of Horatio Willing; Margaret Dale and Catherine Proctor are Back Bay's elder stateswomen, and Joan Chandler and David McKay are the Apley children. As he starts his part Mr. McKay obviously will have far to go before reaching the Apley dignity. Mr. Kaufman directed, and there is one brief scene of the family returning to the drawing room after Thanksgiving dinner which is right from the heart of tomorrow. Stewart Chaney's sets are official.

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
November 22, 1944

'Late George Apley' a Delightful, Nasty, Funny Boston Tea Party

By JOHN CHAPMAN

THE professional Bostonian, like the professional Southerner, can be quaint and interesting and sometimes impressive—but he can also be somewhat annoying. Don't let any Bostonian talk so much about the "inside" humors of "The Late George Apley"—the gags about Worcester, the traditions of Beacon Street and so on—that you finally give up and say shucks, this isn't for me. For "The Late George Apley" is a splendid, witty, nasty and beautifully acted comedy and I'll fight any Boston toff who thinks he likes it better.

John P. Marquand wrote "The Late George Apley" as a novel and it won a Pulitzer prize. Mr. Marquand and George S. Kaufman have dramatized it. Max Gordon produced it last night at the Lyceum Theatre with Leo G. Carroll in the title role, and Mr. Kaufman cast and directed it. One can't ask for more in any one theatre.

His Best Role

Leo Carroll has been on the Broadway stage for a long time. An Englishman, he appeared here first in Noel Coward's play, "The Vortex." Since then he has given many performances that are pleasant to remember — the butler, Trump, in "The Green Bay Tree," the detective in "Angel Street" among them. Always they have had a satin finish even when they have been relatively unimportant.

Now, as George Apley, Carroll has a full-size role, and he is a delight. Describing his melancholy countenance, he once said he has a face like a flag on a still day. This face is just the right one for Apley, the Boston Brahmin, who, upon discovering the writings

of Freud, says it appears that "sex very largely governs the lives of the people . . . in other parts of the country."

Sex does not govern the lives of the Boston Apleys. Tradition and position do. When George himself was young he fell in love with the daughter of an Irish cop, but his father quickly whisked him off on a grand tour of Europe and when he came back he married the right girl and they have lived properly ever after.

Recovers in Time

Now their children, a boy and a girl, are falling in love—and not with the right people. This is a momentary facer for George, particularly when his daughter starts quoting Freud at him, and he almost becomes human. Just in time he recovers himself, and position and tradition are reasserted. True, the daughter does manage to marry a chap from Greenwich Village, but by curtain-fall the son, having had his own tour of Europe and having also married the right girl, is nicely on the way toward being as big an old poop as his father was.

By now everybody knows the quiet, delicious malice with which Marquand writes his stories of New England boiled shirts. This understatement is adaptable to astringent comedy upon the stage when it has Kaufman to direct the players. Last night I thought Kaufman missed only once—in the strident key in which he had Margaret Dale play one of the Apley relatives just for the sake of a few exit lines.

Janet Beecher as Mrs. Apley, Percy Waram as a human being actually alive in Beacon Street in the year 1912, Joan Chandler and David McKay as the daughter and son and Margaret Phillips as a socially respectable young drip are all just fine, thanks.

"The Late George Apley" is a new kind of Boston Tea Party; it throws Boston into the harbor and it seems to be a good idea.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
November 22, 1944

A Gay Back Bay Portrait

By HOWARD BARNES

A BRILLIANT comedy of manners has opened at the Lyceum Theater. "The Late George Apley," based on John P. Marquand's Pulitzer Prize novel, may be circumscribed in its contemplation of a Beacon Street Boston family in 1912. It is universal in its dramatic and social inflections. What is more, this new Max Gordon production is great good fun. With George S. Kaufman aiding the original author in making a book into a play, his meticulous direction and a gallery of rich and varied characterizations, the offering has substance, humor and a pervasive period atmosphere.

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One does not need to have lived on Beacon Street to appreciate the peculiar flavor and delight of "The Late George Apley." Marquand's reasonably astringent observations on Yankee high society have been caught on the stage in a series of vignettes in which warmth is always mixed with laughter. Apley himself, busying himself as a Bird Watcher or a Trustee of the Waifs and opposing his son's marriage to a girl from Worcester, of all places, only to discover that the intended daughter-in-law's father will have no part of the Apleys, is never a caricature. He is funny, but very human.

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So are all the other slightly archaic figures which populate the drama. The old-fashioned but understanding mother, the rebellious youngsters and the raft of in-laws who must always get together on such occasions as Thanksgiving and must always quarrel, are drawn with precise wit and dramatic definition in "The Late George Apley." The row over Cousin Harriet's being buried too high up in the family cemetery plot is downright wonderful, and the breezy invasion of Beacon Street by a brash New Yorker who went to Yale and refuses to worship Emerson makes for a variety of comical incident.

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The script does not always build, but that is frequently the case when the theater borrows from literature. The second act has a tendency to drag. The first and final stanzas claim one's attention constantly. Since Leo G. Carroll plays the title role with superb skill, Percy Waram creates a splendid renegade out of Cousin Roger, and Janet Beecher is just about perfect as Mrs. Apley, there is no lack of performing to implement the action. The scene in which Carroll, after dipping into Freud and his own innate tolerance, gets the brush-off from a Worcester tool manufacturer is something for the books.

• • •

Joan Chandler is lovely as Eleanor Apley, who kicks over the traces and goes to Greenwich Village; Margaret Phillips is fine as the right girl for John Apley, and Margaret Dale, John Conway and the others never falter. The Stewart Chaney settings, incidentally, with Chinese bronze and the bell-pull atrocities of Boston 1912 decoration match his period costumes in making "The Late George Apley" a gay and sometimes touching portrait of a period and a social group.

NEW YORK NEWSPAPER PM
November 22, 1944

A Nice View of Beacon Street

By LOUIS KRONENBERGER

FROM J. P. Marquand's well-known novel Mr. Marquand and George S. Kaufman have made a pleasant play that will also be an extremely popular one. It has its quota of funny lines, of entertaining scenes, of Beacon St. atmosphere; and in Leo G. Carroll it has an actor who can play George Apley with genuine perception and superb finish. That is as much, perhaps, as one can expect of *The Late George Apley* on the stage. Obviously it had to differ from the book, and it isn't surprising that it is by no means so good as the book. And even on its own terms it is a little thin, a little too mixed up in its tone, and more than a little repetitious in its humor.

There isn't much point in extensively contrasting book and play; at least, the main object—of portraying a Boston Brahmin who was a slave to code and a creature, not so much of thoughts and emotions as of conditioned reflexes—is the same in both. The double-lens method of the novel, which parodies, a fuddy-duddy biographer while satirizing his subject, must naturally be lost. So, too (which is more of a sacrifice) must the gradual development of Apley himself. Apley is presented to us in middle age, after his character has congealed. He is presented, atmospherically, in terms of his very small pursuits and tempest-in-a-demi-tasse crises; he is presented a trifle more dramatically in relation to his son and daughter, both of whom are ready to break with traditions for love (as once their father had been). Along with this goes a comedy of Boston manners, as well as some broader comedy that must be pinned on New York, where Mr. Kaufman barbarically resides.

What we most lose of Apley on the stage is the chance to watch him harden into a mold; as we also lose some of those centrifugal impulses that Apley could keep in check but never quite kill. We only see a man who has made privilege a synonym for duty, and bumbling pursuits a symbol of Boston importance. Apley is permitted his wistful reminiscences and for a time is even prepared to let his children go their own way; but the reminiscences fail of effect, as the sudden parental dispensations rather fail of credibility. The authors' character-drawing is really not so good as Mr. Carroll's character acting; it is Mr. Carroll who, with real artistry, makes Apley always walk his own chalkline.

The fun in the play lies in variations on the theme of Boston smugness and snobbery, and some of it is very good fun indeed. Apley's bird walks, Cousin Hattie's tombstone, Harvard, Emerson, the outer darkness of New York—these take turns supplying laughs, and perhaps they take a few too many. By the third act, at any rate, the fun is pretty well played out. And the epilogue, which shows Apley's son well on the way to becoming father, is on the whole not judicious.

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The acting is generally good, though it is done in rather a medley of styles. Only Percy Waram as Apley's brother-in-law and Janet Beecher as his wife play along with Mr. Carroll in the Beacon St. manner; their performances are consonant and good. Margaret Dale is good in a broader way, and in her one real scene Margaret Phillips comes through very well. The least happy characterization in the play is that of Apley's son, and it allows David McKay little elbow room. Most of the other characters are helpful, and Mr. Kaufman's direction is good on the whole, though it countenances some running exits better suited to farce. Stewart Chaney's set is suitably handsome.

"The Streets Are Guarded"

Play by Laurence Stallings; staged by John Haggott; settings designed by Lee Simonson; presented by John C. Wilson at Henry Miller's Theater, November 20, 1944.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
November 21, 1944

Stallings' New Play Abstruse War Story

By BURTON RASCOE

"THE STREETS ARE GUARDED," the new play by Col. Lawrence Stallings, USMC., which opened at Henry Miller's Theater last night, is an interesting (though often rather abstruse and highly technical) essay on the traditions and discipline of the Marine Corps rather than a drama.

Its appeal, I should say, is to seasoned professional soldiers rather than to civilians or to ordinary enlisted men. It is for West Point, Annapolis and Quantico rather than Broadway; for its technical terms, allusions and some of the action are entirely unintelligible to the average playgoer. Even the jokes—which were laughed at on the stage—had all but a few in the audience bewildered.

Adding to the layman's confusion is the never quite clearly resolved mysticism of the theme. Throughout the first act (there are only two acts of several scenes each, with a prologue and epilogue) I had the impression that the Marine hero of the story was a revenant, and that he had returned to earth to lead an unarmed group of seven Air Force and navy men off an island in the Pacific, where they had been stranded and were in momentary danger of being annihilated by the Japs.

Religious Overtone

This impression is conveyed by the old sea dog (Morton L. Stevens) who tells the story in

THE CAST

Admiral Overhold, U. S. N.	Len Doyle
Col. White, U.S.M.C.	Gordon Nelson
Tom Jelks, Ch. Phar. Mate, U.S.N.	Morton L. Stevens
The Marine	Phil Brown
Memphis Jones, Ch. B'sun's Mate, U.S.N.	George Matthews
Master Sergt. Winters, U.S.A.A.F.	Robertson White
Corp. Beaseley, U.S.A.A.F.	Paul Crabtree
Corp. Crofton, U.S.A.A.F.	Joel Marston
Choppy, Musician, 2d Class, U.S.N.	Jack Manning
Angelika	Jeanne Cagney
Naval Aide, Lieut.-Comdr., U.S.N.	John Effrat
Seaman, U.S.N.	Byron Griffith
Seaman, U.S.N.	Terry Little
Hanson, Ch. Yeoman, U.S.N.	Lewis Charles
A Colonel of Marines	Roderick Maybee

a prologue with cut-backs. He is deeply religious, and his tale is one of strange events which have the air of having been accomplished only by supernatural agency. In fact, Mr. Stevens describes the heroic Marine in terms suggesting he is The Christ. There is the pierced hand of the Marine, in obvious allusion to the martyrdom of the Cross — a wound the Marine makes light of but declines to explain. His comments and actions, throughout, suggest that he is no mere mortal but a being gifted with supernatural intelligence, superhuman strength and apparently partaking of the quality of invisibility at will.

But when the play ends (so abruptly that I, for one, thought the action was just going to begin) you discover that this is only the story of a rescue as it seeps through the fever-distorted brain of an old professional Navy man who is fanatically religious, and that the events related are not only explainable on quite rational grounds but are of the essence of Marine Corps routine. In other words, what Col. Stallings is trying to say (I think) is that the Marines are always accomplishing the seemingly impossible and coming through with what looks like works of divine intervention, but that this is only because the training of the Devil Dogs is so severe, so intelligent and so thorough and the personnel of the corps so selective that what seems like supernatural feats to others is only routine soldiering with them.

Little Action

To convey this message Col. Stallings has written a play with very little action in it. The characters are expository rather than personalized. The navy men explain to the air men the details of their branch of the service and the air men return the favor; and there are elaborate explanations of what it means to be a Marine—from the description of the emblem to disclosures of the items in the code of a Marine.

All this is, or should be, enlightening to the intelligent layman; none of it is tedious; but it is more like a Quantico course on morale and discipline than like a play. The actors are expert and well coached, the highest honor going, perhaps, to Paul Crabtree for his bit characterization of a green young Air Corps corporal; but Phil Brown handled a difficult part as the sublimated Marine very well indeed, and George Matthews was amusingly real as the tough bosun's mate. The settings by Lee Simonson are both realistic and suggestive of the mood.

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
November 21, 1944

'Streets Are Guarded' a Thriller About a Marine's War on Japs

By JOHN CHAPMAN

IN "The Streets Are Guarded" Laurence Stallings has a hearty, exciting melodrama about a marine and some other characters on a jungle island in the Pacific, and at Henry Miller's Theatre it is acted the way it should be acted. The men are tough, funny and admirable, and they make it pleasant for you to sweat out an experience with the Japs as you sit in your chair.

Unlike some others who have chosen this war as a drama topic, Stallings does not sit back on his behind and philosophize about it, or give off a lecture about What We Are Fighting For. He just puts a bunch of guys in a nasty spot and lets them fight it out.

There is one old chief pharmacist's mate who thinks he sees something mystic in what goes on, as if maybe Christ himself had been sent down to help out—but he's a little out of his head from wounds and it's just one man's opinion. Stallings is content with making his men true and hard. He has contrived to make them speak with the utmost vigor without cussing all over the place.

The U.S.M.C. to the Rescue

There are no streets on this island things happen on; the title is part of a line from the Marine Corps song. Here on the island is a house occupied by a lone Dutch girl, and here have come six men—three navy guys from a torpedoed ship and three air corpsmen from a crashed bomber. Across the way is a big island full of Japs.

In comes a lean, tight-lipped marine, all the way from Bataan and Corregidor in a small boat, looking for an outfit of marines to join up with. The injured pharmacist's mate thinks the Lord Himself has sent the man, just to raid the Jap island and bring back some medical supplies. So the marine takes charge and pulls off the raid.

Here Stallings does something which I do not like in principle—and gets away with it. He causes an important bit of action—the raid —to occur offstage, so you know of it only by hearing people talk about it, and manages to make it exciting. This is a trick which is not often successful.

Still Waiting Around

Almost everybody gets off all right, thanks to a submarine squadron—but not the marine and a funny, blabbermouth bosun's mate. They go back to the big Jap island. The mate's body is found . . . but no trace of the marine. And back in the naval hospital in Washington the old fellow who was delirious is certain the marine is just waiting for somebody to get in a tough jam again, and he'll appear.

As the main character Phil Brown plays with commanding reticence, Len Doyle is admirably funny as a hard-bitten admiral, George Matthews provides rowdy humor as the bosun's mate and Morton L. Stevens contributes the bit of mysticism as the injured man. All the others are right for their jobs.

Jeanne Cagney is the girl. But this is no 1944 version of the Stallings-Maxwell Anderson "What Price Glory," so there isn't a lot of sex in the play. The setting by Lee Simonson is satisfyingly atmospheric, and John Haggott, the director, has kept everybody going at a good clip.

"The Streets Are Guarded" isn't profound or shocking. It's just a war thriller by one who writes tightly and knows how men talk. You can just see Humphrey Bogart in the screen version.

NEW YORK TIMES
November 21, 1944

Mr. Stallings Writes of the Marines of World War II in 'The Streets Are Guarded'

By LEWIS NICHOLS

JUST two decades after he and Maxwell Anderson wrote the best drama about the First World War, Laurence Stallings has set down a play about the second. To get on with the comparison, which is inevitable, "The Streets Are Guarded," which opened last evening at Henry Miller's, is no "What Price Glory?" It has a few moments of good rowdy dialogue, and one or two of the characters are well drawn, but the play as a whole is mystical and obscure, it is sentimental and a bit too pat, it is at times too literary and at other times too static. Mr. Stallings' heart, mind and pen all are obviously on the side of the marines —which is the best place to have them—but he has not succeeded in making his friends fully lifelike and adult.

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The main section of the play takes place on an island in the Pacific. Several Navy men have been cast up there, and three fliers, and not far away is another island held by the Japanese. A pharmacist's mate is ill of malaria, and in delirium asks that a miracle send quinine and help; a marine corporal walks in. He had been on the other island until the Japanese had caught and killed his captain; he, himself, was trying to flee south by boat. With one of the fliers and one of the sailors, he crosses to the other shore, kills an officer and returns with drugs and a radio; help is summoned and the marines arrive in force. The play has a prologue and epilogue set in a Washington hospital, where the marine's father, who thought his boy had been killed on Bataan, learns the story.

In setting this forth, Mr. Stallings has been not a little obscure. It is impossible to tell whether the figure of the marine is a symbol or he actually is a corporal who somehow got away from Bataan. The sick mate, in a jumble of Biblical quotations, is sure the marine has been sent from heaven, and at the end he disappears without trace; whether miracle or real, Mr. Stallings does not say. The obscure quality of the chief character does not help the clarity of the play. Some of the other features of "The Streets Are Guarded" do not help it either. All of the play's action takes place away from the stage; there are too many hearts of pure gold; there is an ending of the marines to the rescue that has been done so to death by the movies that it should never be done again.

The best character of "The Streets Are Guarded" is one Memphis Jones, an old-timer in the navy. George Matthews plays him admirably, speaking Mr. Stallings' best lines with complete gusto. Phil Brown is the marine, and does well by him, and Robertson White is the sergeant of the fliers. There is one woman on the island, possibly because this is a play, with Jeanne Cagney in the role, somewhat handicapped by the fact Mr. Stallings hasn't been thinking of his feminine character. The high officers of the Navy and Marine Corps who finally come to the rescue are incredibly sentimental people; Len Doyle and Gordon Nelson have the roles. Lee Simonson has constructed a good island hut.

The title comes from the last lines of the Marine's Hymn:

If the Army and the Navy
Ever look on heaven's scenes,
They will find the streets are guarded
By United States Marines.

They will be, too, but the marines will be more lifelike in conversation and action than Mr. Stallings'.

NEW YORK SUN
November 21, 1944

'The Streets Are Guarded,' New War Play, Is Not a Stirring Drama

By WARD MOREHOUSE

TWENTY YEARS AGO Laurence Stallings came forth as co-author with Maxwell Anderson of a glorious play in "What Price Glory." Now Mr. Stallings, going it alone, submits another war play, "The Streets Are Guarded," brought into Henry Miller's last night by John C. Wilson.

This time Mr. Stallings doesn't do the trick. "The Streets Are Guarded" is not the rugged play expected from him. It is straggling and slow-going for most of the way. Done in two parts, the second half is somewhat better than the first, but it's a play that comes to life only momentarily. And knowing the Stallings capacity for pungent speech, I was surprised that there was not more jolting sharpness to the talk.

The form of the play is not advantageous. The action takes place at the United States Naval Hospital in Washington and on an island in the far Pacific. The flash-back method, with a prologue and an epilogue, is used and the play ends on a very flat note with the Admiral speaking for the boys and the cause for which they're fighting.

Mr. Stallings knows his Marines. And he has since he himself was severely wounded while serving with them in France in 1918. But the one haggard and magnificent Marine about whom he's now writing doesn't come through as the hell-roaring character the author intended to present.

This Marine happens upon a group of seven —three United States Air Force men, three Navy men and a Dutch nurse—in an island jungle. One of the group, a Scripture-quoting pharmacist's mate, is deliriously ill, in need of sulfa drugs and quinine. So the Marine takes over. In a leaky boat he leads a raid on the nearby Jap-held island, gets the supplies and a radio set and kills a general. Later, when a rescue detachment arrives, it is again the Marine who goes forth as guide in an attack on the Jap position. The Marine is missing in action when the play ends.

Phil Brown gives some force to the character of the Marine, but he never becomes so exciting as the prologue indicated that he might be. George Matthews brings a lot of vigor to the playing of Memphis Jones chief b'sun's mate, who goes along on both raids. Len Doyle gives authority to the role of the admiral. The sick man, as done by Morton L. Stevens, who believes that the Jap-raiding Marine is heaven-sent, is as tiresome a fellow as anybody ever put into a war play. The Dutch nurse, done by Jeanne Cagney, is an unnecessary character. Lee Simonson, absent from the theater for some seasons, has contributed two good settings.

With all due respect to Mr. Stallings, once a desk mate of mine in a revered City Room of Atlanta, "The Streets Are Guarded" is not a striking play. It is not a very good play. It's a disappointing job from the co-author of "What Price Glory" and the author of "The Big Parade."

NEW YORK POST
November 21, 1944

'The Streets Are Guarded' More Mystic Than Dramatic

By WILELLA WALDORF

"WHAT PRICE GLORY" wasn't written until six years after World War I ended, but both of its authors are busily engaged in dramatizing World War II while it is still going on. Maxwell Anderson's "The Eve of St. Mark" was a moving play about American soldiers on Bataan, but his "Storm Operation" presented a surprisingly artificial picture of the North African campaign.

Last night at Henry Miller's Theatre Laurence Stallings tried his hand at interpreting this greatest of all wars for a Broadway audience. He seemed to be very much in earnest about it and perhaps he was trying to send us a profound and stirring message. Unfortunately, something went wrong. Either we don't speak the same language or Mr. Stallings was using code and neglected to give us the key.

"The Streets Are Guarded" (the title comes, of course, from the Marine Corps song) is laid for the most part on a remote island somewhere in the Pacific, where a handful of sailors and flyers are marooned, after Bataan, with Japs on all the islands round about.

The only other occupant of the isle is a blond Dutch girl who managed, through some miracle, to escape when the Japs removed the rest of the population. She looks remarkably chic considering what she must have been through, and there is no doubt that she lends a dash of feminine allure to what would otherwise have been an all-male cast.

Enter the Marine

The Savior of this little band is a lone Marine who wanders in by boat, wearing a Captain's hat. He explains that he is just a corporal and that his Captain was killed by the Japs, but the Air Force non-coms and the Navy Chief Petty Officers are sufficiently impressed with him to join in what looks like a suicide raid on the next island for medical supplies, cigarettes and cigars.

The Marine is a clever strategist and he fools the Japs completely. The party even captures a walkie-talkie radio outfit. It might have been a fairly exciting sortie, too, had Mr. Stallings not gone mystic on us.

Although it is evident that the wounded sailor who keeps babbling on about miracles and faith is sometimes light-headed with fever, it is also evident that the author is suggesting to his audience that the Marine seems to have a touch of the miraculous power of that other Savior who died on Calvary.

Combined Operations

Then, having dealt rather elaborately in mysticism for more than half the evening, Mr. Stallings suddenly shifts his style after the single intermission, tosses in some amiable comedy, brings on a refreshingly bluff Admiral and plunges into some complicated Combined Operations planned in what we have no doubt are authentic military and naval terms but which mean very little unless you understand the lingo.

Phil Brown does nicely as the Marine, Paul Crabtree makes his few comedy lines count and there is capable work by Len Doyle, George Matthews, Robertson White, Morton L. Stevens and a flock of other stage service men, while Jeanne Cagney plays the Dutch maiden simply and unaffectedly.

But "The Streets Are Guarded" is a generally baffling and curiously unsatisfying drama. Probably Mr. Stallings is only trying to say that in wartime miracles are performed every day by miracle men in uniform. If so, it's too bad he couldn't have said it with less double talk and more punch.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
November 21, 1944

Fails to Land

By HOWARD BARNES

LAURENCE STALLINGS has once more become a chronicler of the battle fronts in "The Streets Are Guarded." It is a pity that he did not employ more dramatic compulsion and eloquence on this latter-day companion piece to "What Price Glory" and "The Big Parade." For this mystical salute to a marine corporal on a South Sea atoll is more mystifying than magnetic. John C. Wilson has clothed the new offering at Henry Miller's Theater with a first-rate production. The Lee Simonson settings are fine, and so is much of the acting. The trouble is that the play never communicates with its audience.

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What the author had in mind is anybody's guess. The marine hero of the action is a sort of sanctified leatherneck, taking charge of island-jumping, even though he is a corporal, wearing his dead captain's insignia. He talks like a saint at times, but that does little to help the definition of a supposedly rugged plot. His stigmata would have one believe that he has already got to that paradise where the marines take care of traffic. His crafty invasion of a Japanese-held island is too realistic to accept its fantastical overtones.

It is a matter of writing rather than projection. Lieutenant Colonel Stallings may have been passionately inspired by his theme. At times he invokes considerable tension and humor. But his play as a whole goes dead early and stays very dormant through to the last curtain. The marines certainly deserve a better dramatic accolade than you will find on Forty-third Street. A mystical conceit is no substitute for a story line. Embarrassing dialogue, that could never have been spoken by fighting men, makes the show so much worse.

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The acting is good. Phil Brown does his level best with the role of the marine descending from heaven to help out some pals trapped on an atoll. George Matthews has some salty asides as a bosun's mate and Robertson White, Paul Crabtree and Joel Marston are excellent as stranded flyers. Then there is Jeanne Cagney, playing one of the most anomalous roles of the season as a Dutch girl, who shifts her affections from a seaman to a marine, with little or no explanation of what she is up to. It is difficult to determine what "The Streets Are Guarded" is up to. Whatever it is, it doesn't come off.

NEW YORK NEWSPAPER PM
November 21, 1944

Paging Quirt and Flagg

By LOUIS KRONENBERGER

IN *What Price Glory?* Laurence Stallings helped write the best American play about World War I. That was 20 years ago, and after one or two minor skirmishes in the theater, Mr. Stallings deserted it until, on Monday night, he returned with a play about World War II. The period between two wars saw many great changes, but perhaps none more singular than Mr. Stallings' as a playwright of soldiering. It is not merely that *What Price Glory?* was as good a play as *The Streets Are Guarded* is a bad one. It is that *What Price Glory?* was as tough, lusty and genuine as *The Streets Are Guarded*—for all its conscientious profanity—is soft, mystical and synthetic.

But possibly the change is not so singular after all. Mr. Stallings fought in one war, and brought experience and observation to the play he wrote about it. This time he is not only looking at war from a distance, and so missing its rhythm and reality; he is also hamstrung by war memories softened by time. They have made him nostalgic, romantic, even mystical; they have stirred his heart without being controlled by his mind. He has told of a Marine whose heroic feats can only be considered a miracle; he himself, during most of the play, seems to identify them as one; but at the end, his admiral says, rather, that such feats are the common practice of this war.

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What the fabulous Marine and a handful of sailors and aviators manage to do against the Japs is not in itself beyond belief. Doubtless such things have actually been done, and more than once. Still, exceptional heroism calls for the most expert handling; and here it has been handled almost grotesquely. The play is not only full of fuzzy overtones imparted by a God-intoxicated pharmacist's mate who preaches faith; it is equally choked with juvenile behavior that I can't believe Mr. Stallings meant for that. Worse still, it is not on any terms really a play; it has no dramatic development. It is propped up with all kinds of make-shifts, including a needless prologue and epilogue. A lot of the time it is merely dull, and only manages to be briefly lively by indulging in horseplay. Even Mr. Stallings' attemps at salty dialogue have a desperate air about them; this is not real barracks talk, it is more that of a Boy Scout who has taken a drink.

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Nor is the production much of a help. At times it seems stiff, at other times all too hearty. Phil Brown is not too bad as the Marine, but he lacks color and force. Morton L. Stevens, burdened with the deplorable part of the pharmacist's mate, does nothing to improve it; and as a storybook admiral, Len Doyle himself adds nothing real. Jeanne Cagney is the one girl in the play, and does little with a wasted role. The liveliest part goes to George Matthews, who does the liveliest job, squirting a little noisy seltzer into a very flat drink.

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'Streets Are Guarded' At Miller's Theatre

By ROBERT GARLAND

LAURENCE STALLINGS has turned out an extraordinary play in "The Streets Are Guarded," which came last night into Henry Miller's Theatre. I wouldn't say it's a good play. I wouldn't say it's a bad play. Frankly, I wouldn't know. In all my playgoing afternoons and evenings, I've never come upon its likes before. For two acts, including a prologue and an epilogue, nothing whatever happens. Nothing whatever, except life, death and a great, great gallantry.

"The Streets Are Guarded" has to do with the Marine Corps. And the Marine Corps is an outfit about which Mr. Stallings is well aware. He also is aware about the Navy, with which the Marine Corps is not exactly unassociated. Which is why his colonels and his pharmacists' mates, his yeomen and his musicians second-class, talk and act and react as if they were three-dimensional human beings, going through a hell of a time on an island somewhere in the so-called Pacific Ocean.

If I weren't afraid of giving you the wrong impression, I'd say that "The Streets Are Guarded" is more of a character-study than a play. On that island somewhere in the so-called Pacific Ocean, Mr. Stallings' sailors and marines have height and breadth and thickness. It's they who make the evening. Not what they do. Not what happens to them. But them!